



Indiana State Department of Health



October 27, 2004

STATE OFFICIALS HIGHLIGHT HOMELAND SECURITY, INTRODUCE DISTRICTS

Terre Haute---Indiana extended its observation of National Preparedness Month into October by hosting an informational meeting on the state's homeland security efforts tonight in Terre Haute.

In addition to sharing information on homeland security programs administered by the state, officials introduced Indiana's 10 homeland security districts. The districts will assist state and local government in developing homeland security plans.

"The state of Indiana recognizes the importance of keeping its citizens informed about homeland security efforts in their communities and around the state," said Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis, who serves as the chair of Indiana's Counter Terrorism and Security Council (CTASC). "We are listening to Hoosiers' concerns, and giving them an opportunity to learn more about our day-to-day activities. State government is working hard to keep Hoosiers safe by safeguarding against bio-terrorism, training first responders and developing unique information-sharing tools through initiatives such as the Indiana Alert Network."

Each agency involved discussed the homeland security programs it administers. CTASC, Indiana's homeland security coordinating agency, highlighted the Indiana Alert Network (IAN). IAN is an alert notification tool using internet-based applications that allows for the quick dissemination of information, via various communication tools, on Indiana's critical infrastructure to registered users.

"Indiana's homeland security efforts must include sound planning and reliable information to be effective," said Earl Morgan, Director of CTASC. "We feel strongly both IAN and Indiana's homeland security districts make positive contributions in those areas."

--MORE--

HOMELAND SECURITY DISTRICTS

Add One

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to discuss Indiana's efforts in public health preparedness and bioterrorism response," said State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. "With the help of our stakeholders, most notably the local health departments, we have made much progress in the last several years. Whether the response to an incident involves anthrax or hepatitis A, a coordinated community effort is essential and that is what we are building together."

The agencies also recognized the assistance of their various federal partners. CTASC, the state's liaison to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), currently operates the Indiana Alert Network, a DHS pilot program. In addition, the bioterrorism preparedness grants administered by the State Department of Health are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Indiana's State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) administers DHS's Office of Domestic Preparedness funding to responders around the state.

"Our goal is to ensure the safety of all Hoosiers by assisting communities in planning, training and exercising," said Luther J. Taylor, Sr., SEMA's Executive Director. "Locals are the first to respond to an incident. We want to ensure they are aware of the resources available and work with them to obtain the best equipment available."

The meeting in Terre Haute is final of the 10 statewide meetings, one in each of the homeland security districts.

For additional information on each agency's homeland security efforts, visit their websites at www.in.gov/ctasc , www.isdh.in.gov/bioterrorism, and www.sema.in.gov.

###

Media Contacts:

Lori Lambert, CTASC, 317-232-8303

Margaret Joseph, ISDH, 317-233-7315 or Andy Zirkle, 317-233-7306

Alden Taylor, SEMA 317-232-3992